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What is God Really Like?

God is Good
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Choose 4-5 of these questions to prayerfully reflect upon. Be ready to discuss your conclusions in our group meeting!

Last week I was in a class for Red Cross volunteers responding to disasters. The instructor addressed spiritual health and said that during disasters some people find faith while other people lose their faith in God. Does this tell us anything about God? What does it say about people enduring suffering?

Suffering can come in several forms including “natural” (wounds, gout, infection, hunger), emotional (loneliness, embarrassment, hurt feelings), and spiritual (guilt, fear). What are some things that might make suffering “good?”

Why did James recommend we consider it “joy” when facing trials (James 1:2-4)? Is that realistic?

Sometimes God has caused bad things to happen to people: the flood (Genesis 6-8), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and King Herod (Acts 12:20-23), to name some. Do think God should do this more or less? What principle would you use in deciding when to “smite” people?

Read John 16:31-33, 2 Timothy 3:10-13, and 1 Peter 2:19-21. Should Christians suffer more or less than unbelievers? Why? Is it fair?

Now read Matthew 6:28-33 and Philippians 4:10-19. How do you explain these promises of provision knowing of some peoples’ experiences of hunger and poverty?

C.S. Lewis defined “the problem of pain” in this way: “If God were good, He would make His creatures perfectly happy, and if He were almighty He would be able to do what he wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.” How would you respond to a relative or friend who challenged you with this problem?